

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 5, Summer 2023



teach • love • inspire
CONNECTICUT
FATHERHOOD
INITIATIVE



Summer Edition

This Issue's focus:

Celebrating Father's Day
Fatherhood Success Stories
Statistics
Contact Us

Welcome to the Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative Quarterly Newsletter!

Message from Our Network

Commissioner Andrea Barton Reeves

Connecticut Department of Social Services

I appreciate the opportunity to introduce myself to the CT Fatherhood Initiative (CFI) network and am excited to build on the work that CFI partners have done over the last two decades! I was appointed Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS) in January 2023. Prior to coming to DSS, I headed the Connecticut Paid Family Leave Authority as the program launched and began distributing critical benefits to the working people of our state. In just these initial 6 months, I have learned just how much of an impact the CFI makes – at the heart is collaboration, which is essential to our success as we seek to support fathers and families. Fathers play a vital role in the development of a child's life, so what better way to celebrate their influence ahead of Father's Day than by having our June newsletter highlight some of the wonderful fathers across our state? The CT Fatherhood Initiative works to help fathers succeed to ensure their child has the brightest future possible. Wishing a very Happy Father's Day to all Connecticut fathers!

for more information about DSS programs and services visit: <https://portal.ct.gov/dss>

Family Strides

Family Strides Fatherhood Program

Family Strides Fatherhood Program is a Torrington, CT state-certified program that is funded by the CT Department of Social Services. The program focuses on positively engaging fathers in their children's life by helping them become aware of the important role they play in their children's life. We assist fathers in seeking opportunities to gain the tools and skills needed to meet their own basic needs.



Tre Murphy

Being a good father has been something that was important to me. My father

and I had a very rough relationship. He never taught me much besides what not to be. Sometimes we tend to see the worst in things. Just like when an artist is the only one to see a mistake in a piece they did. As humans we all have flaws, no one is perfect. I always feared I was no better than my dad. However, through this program, I was able to see that there is a difference. I am NOT my father. I was able to see greater things within myself and the things I could improve upon. I got a better understanding of what I am and who I want to be as a father. It enabled me to see that the way I felt sometimes wasn't unique to me. I was able to connect to other men and work to be better for ourselves and our loved ones.

GBAPP

Teen Fathers Program

Greater Bridgeport Area Prevention Program (GBAPP) is proud to be the home of Connecticut's accredited Teen Fathers Program for the past 13 years. The Program is designed to help young men become confident, nurturing parents and realize the full potential of a relationship with their children. The Program seeks to destigmatize the negativity of fatherhood and break the cycle of absentee fatherhood by providing education, counseling, advice, and support.



Jermaine Headen

GBAPP's Teen Father's Program is proud to spotlight Jermaine Headen, a proud father of a one-year-old. Since joining the

program Jermaine has continually progressed in becoming the best man and father possible while creating and accomplishing new goals. This program is supported by the State of CT Department of Social Services.

Quote from Dad- "Do the best you can for yourself. Then do better for your child!"

This is important to Jermaine because when he considers his own childhood, he is consistently reminded of the many excuses that he would make for his family. Realizing that these are poor examples of family values, Jermaine chooses to exemplify everything that his family was not! To Jermaine, fatherhood is about improving upon failures while recognizing that it's okay to be imperfect.

Some Statistics . . .

- ❑ As of 2021, there were a little over 7 million single-father households in the US and just under 50,000 single-father households in the state of CT.
- ❑ Single-father families are on the rise! There currently are 70 times as many single-father families in the US as there were in 1970, and they now make up about 20% of single-parent families in the US. The number of Black single-father families has been particularly increasing.
- ❑ On average, single-father families are less likely to live in poverty than single-mother families. But single fathers are less likely to receive the full amount of child support awarded and more likely to receive no child support, compared with single mothers.
- ❑ Single fathers often report feeling "invisible" and having people assume that he is "just babysitting," and frequently having to correct and remind people like their children's school and doctors that they are the primary parent.

Career Resources, Inc. (CRI) Dobson Fathers for Life Program

Career Resources, Inc. (CRI) of Bridgeport offers job seekers throughout Connecticut the training, support, and resources needed to become employed and succeed in the workforce. CRI's Fathers for Life - Fatherhood Initiative Program provides life skills, parenting skills, advocacy, and support for all interested parents.



Timothy Dobson

In October 1988, I was sentenced to 68 years in prison. I thought I would die in prison. The only reason I am alive is because of my daughter. There is nothing in me that gave me the confidence that I was equipped to do all the years I have done in prison except that I knew I couldn't leave her out there all by herself.

I decided to live and become better and end up enjoying whom I became in the end. Most people give glory to God for the lesson that was taught. I credit God for giving me the wisdom to know that she was the tool he would use to get me to overcome.

If there is anybody that deserves credit for who I am, what I have become, and how hard I worked to stay this way, it's that fantastic little girl who had endured more than she needed to but never complained, and told the world, "I don't care what you think. He is my dad, and I love him, and I am not letting him go, and he is going to make all of you bite your words."

I stand proudly and boldly within my authentic self. I faced enormous hurdles, but each brought with it the gift of realization and resolution. The change you see is in my perspective and how I see myself and the world. I stand before you having made the most meaningful choice of my life, the choice to change for my daughter.

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford Responsible Fatherhood Initiative Program

The Fatherhood Program facilitated by Catholic Charities was created to help men become that important force in their children's lives. With the resources the program provides, fathers can gain the tools to ensure their children are more likely to achieve social, emotional, mental, physical, and developmental success and overall well-being.



Norris

Norris originally came to Asylum Hill Family Center for help finding legal resources. He was beginning the fight for custody of his daughter through the court system. Norris made numerous calls and did research before reaching out to Catholic Charities. He needed help with understanding and navigating the court system. I gave Norris the names and phone numbers of legal aid and pro bono lawyers. Norris took that information and began his fight for custody of his daughter. Norris began participating in the fatherhood program while going through his child custody case and shared some of the stressful feelings and emotions with the group. This helped educate other fathers. Norris also volunteered in several of the Asylum Hill Family Centers community engagement events and was a regular volunteer at our Food-Share site in Hartford. This was done while working a full-time job and fighting for custody of his daughter. Norris was eventually awarded custody of his beautiful four-year-old daughter. Norris soon experienced another challenge; finding affordable childcare with people he could trust. Using his research and the information I gave him he soon found a daycare for his child. Norris completed the fatherhood program but continued to attend the group sessions serving as an alumni member. He also recruited other dads from the community. Norris remains busy with work and fathering his daughter. He recently has had two new additions to the family. We shared a celebratory laugh, and I told him he could get diapers through our diaper bank. Norris is a father with great character. It's been a pleasure working with him and I thank him for allowing me to assist him on his fatherhood journey.

Did you know?

CT-211 has an eLibrary with information on **FATHERHOOD**

Just CLICK on <https://uwc.211ct.org/category/fatherhood/>

CFI Partners

CT Departments of:

- Children and Families
- Correction
- Developmental Services
- Education
- Housing
- Labor
- Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Social Services
- Public Health
- Veterans Affairs

and

- Office of Early Childhood
- Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division, Support Enforcement Services, and Family Support Magistrate Division
- Board of Pardons and Parole
- Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity
- CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- CT State Colleges and Universities
- United Way of CT
- Legal services, researchers, and numerous community-based, family, and youth-serving providers.

Featured Certified Fatherhood Programs

Family Strides

Family Strides Fatherhood Program

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GBAPP

Teen Fathers Program

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Career Resources, Inc. (CRI) Dobson Fathers for Life Program

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Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford Responsible Fatherhood Initiative Program

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We Want to Hear From You!!!

Let us know what you would like to see in upcoming newsletters!

Email us at: fatherhood@ct.gov

The Department of Social Services (DSS) programs are available to all applicants and recipients without regard to race, color, religious creed, age, sex (including pregnancy and sexual harassment), marital status (including civil union status), national origin, ancestry, intellectual disability, physical disability, (including blindness), past or present history of mental disability, learning disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, workplace hazards to reproductive systems, veteran status, prior conviction of a crime or other factors which cannot lawfully be the basis for employment actions or licensing, retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion or unless the provisions of sec. 46a-80(b) or 46a-81 (b) of the Connecticut General Statutes are controlling or there are bona fide occupational qualifications excluding persons in one of the above protected groups and status as a victim of domestic violence. DSS has a TDD/TTY line for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired and have a TDD/TTY: 1-800-842-4524, or dial 7-1-1. Auxiliary aids are also available for blind or visually impaired persons. The DSS is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer.